

Phantasmagoria

Audio guide

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INSTITUTE

Stop 4.

Hey, I'm Joey Holder. I'm an artist. I work across lots of different mediums, including video, sculpture, installation, and both on and offline as well. I generally create large scale video installations, creating these environments, these worlds that people can experience.

I'm really interested in the way that digital culture, the internet has completely changed our society, how we relate and how it constructs our belief systems.

And so the work that I've produced for this exhibition is called the *The Woosphere*. And it's a large-scale video installation, so there are consoles opposite each other, which look a bit like video game arcade consoles. So there's four of those in the space and the room is covered with digital printed wallpaper and vinyl, so it creates this immersive dark corridor with these screens.

And playing on these screens are four different characters. One of them is Jean Baudrillard, who's the philosopher that came up with the simulation theory. One of them is an alien intelligence called LAM. There's a synthetic brain that's grown in a lab. And finally, Golem, who is from Jewish folklore. And they're each talking over each other.

And so the concept of *The Woosphere* comes from an idea called the Noosphere, which was put forward by a French priest

called Pierre de Chardin and a Russian geochemist called Vladimir Vernadsky, who basically thought about the Noosphere as a sphere of human consciousness, the sphere of mind.

So the work thinks about where we are in our sphere of consciousness today. And like thinking about how digital networks have transformed our consciousness. So rather than a sphere of unified consciousness, now we live in a very fractured schizophrenic consciousness in terms of the digital realm where there's lots of conflicting ideas and stories and beliefs that all exist in these clashing perspectives rather than something that's unified.

The work is black and very neon colours as well, like this mix, and it's drawing on early internet aesthetics. So 90s internet aesthetics also rave culture, transcendence. It also pulls on new age spirituality, wellness culture, memes and Discordianism as well, which started in the 1950s. And then once the internet became more public in the 1990s, Discordianism was spread through various internet sites and so forth as well.

But it's basically kind of satire religion in the sense that it takes the mick out of all belief systems and religions and says that any kind of structured dogma or set of rules in a belief system should be joked about and taken apart, because everything is true at the same time everything is nonsense. This kind of nonsense and satire has become very powerful ways of communicating across digital networks, like these really powerful jokes which become monsters.

I often think that I'm creating this sort of ritual architecture as well. So the kind of architecture has this effect. You know, when you walk into a Gothic cathedral or you encounter stone circles or something, the way that that those things are

organised has this very powerful effect on your body and your mind. It creates this transcendental state.

I mean, if I think about culture or subculture or transcendental experiences for popular culture, I'm thinking that the last time that we had that was when we went to raves. It seemed like the last collective transcendental protest or something. That has so much power, its lack of cohesion or meaning out of the chaos always comes something else, right? So the chaos is these potentials or becomings or something. So maybe if we are in this chaotic, fragmented state, then there are lots of different timelines or pathways or different realities that can come of this. And perhaps like this moment is this tipping point of those potentials.

Maybe the work is saying, we are in this like sea of nonsense now, but that could be like a really productive space.

This is the end of Stop 4.

This is a transcript of an audio guide produced by Henry Moore Institute for the exhibition *Phantasmagoria*, on display from 15 May to 30 August 2026. For more information visit henry-moore.org/phantasmagoria